

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

200 W. Washington, Suite 301
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 233-0696
<http://www.in.gov/legislative>

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6989
BILL NUMBER: SB 211

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 30, 2002
BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Autopsy Costs.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Wyss
FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FUNDS AFFECTED: X **GENERAL**
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill provides that if a death occurs in one Indiana county as a result of an incident that occurred in another Indiana county, and if an autopsy is performed in the county in which the death occurred, the coroner of the county in which the death occurred is required to bill the county in which the incident causing death occurred to recover the cost of the autopsy.

Effective Date: July 1, 2003.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: This bill would require counties to bill for reimbursement of the cost of autopsies ordered by the coroner, prosecuting attorney, or the county health officer to be performed on individuals who died in a county as the result of an incident that occurred in another county. Currently, three counties that have an air ambulance located within the county (Marion, Allen, and Fulton Counties) are required to bill the county where the incident that caused the individual's death occurred for the cost of the autopsy. (The air ambulance service based in Rochester is the second helicopter of the Fort Wayne-based Samaritan Service.) This bill would allow the coroners, prosecuting attorneys, and local health officers of all counties to seek reimbursement for the cost of autopsies performed on individuals who died in a county as the result of an incident that occurred in another county and were subsequently autopsied.

The State Department of Health statistics for CY 2001 indicated that approximately 22% of death certificates issued with a coroner's involvement and an autopsy indicated were for individuals who were not

residents of the county issuing the death certificate. About 500 cases, or 16% of the total coroner's cases, were for individuals who were residents of another Indiana County; and about 5% were for residents of other states. In the instance of out-of-state residents, it is not known what governmental units would be billed by the coroners or if the reimbursements would be collectable.

In 2001, the State Board of Health had reports of coroner-ordered autopsies on 494 Indiana residents who were not residents of the counties where the autopsies were performed. Another 162 autopsies were performed on persons who were residents of another state. The State Department of Health does not track information related to location of an incident that resulted in death. Presumably, the group of cases involving this specific set of circumstances is less than the size of the non-resident group reported above.

For 2001, the Allen County Coroner's Office reported the cost of an autopsy to be between \$1,000 and \$1,600 depending on individual circumstances. The Indiana University Forensic Science Department, which is under contract to the Marion County Coroner, reported a similar range, although the procedures are not charged on an individual basis under the terms of the contract.

Explanation of Local Revenues: Counties would have reimbursements of expenditures equal in amounts to the expenditures incurred by the counties that are billed for services.

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: County coroners' offices, local prosecuting attorneys, and local county health officers.

Information Sources: State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Data Analysis Team; Zach Cattell, Legislative Liaison for the State Department of Health, (317)-233-2170.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathy Norris, 317-234-1360